United Nations E/CN.6/2003/NGO/1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 December 2002

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-seventh session
3-14 March 2003
Item 3 (c) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further action and initiatives: (i) Participation and access to women in the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by International Alliance of Women, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Associated Country Women of the World, Center for Women, the Earth, the Divine, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pax Romana, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Socialist International Women, the Salvation Army and Women's International Zionist Organization, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and European Union of Women, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

02-74684 (E) 191202

Participation and access of women to the media and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women the following statement for information and consideration.

We welcome the convening of the World Summit on the Information Society, in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, and strongly believe that women's input will be necessary. We expect that the conclusions will emphasize the impact information and communication technologies have on women as well as the impact of women on those technologies. We firmly believe that women's involvement in education programming and their full integration in computer professions is of the greatest importance.

We recognize that basic knowledge about information and communication technologies encourages women to deal with and make use of them. We also know that the success stories and positive experiences of women can motivate other women to learn about and work with information and communication technologies. We acknowledge the fact that socially disadvantaged people are lagging behind in computer access and training and welcome the fact that the use of information and communication technologies offers persons with disabilities the chance of integration. The importance of information and communication technologies as a tool in the fight against unemployment, especially of women, must be underlined.

There is an urgent need for the establishment of information technology training centres and courses designed for women, which can contribute to promoting gender equality, both in the workplace and in educational institutions. Furthermore we underline the need for educational institutions to train teachers to offer gender-sensitive education on information and communication technologies.

We note with concern the fact that women are grossly underrepresented in leadership and managing positions in the media, even when women journalists have more and better qualifications than their male colleagues. We state that women have to be presented in the media as persons. We protest the portrayal of women as decoration and mindless objects.

We call on women journalists to support each other and to promote women colleagues, to build networks of competent experts and to make them visible and audible to the public.

We call on Member States:

- To encourage educational authorities and academic institutions to adapt curricula of journalistic studies with a more gender-sensitive approach;
- To encourage national and local authorities to provide access points to information and communication technologies, e.g. by setting up public terminals, in order to offer women easy and free access to those technologies;
- To make information and communications systems accessible for women with disabilities.